

Coping

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Summary: Dark Dawn / SPOILERS for the Yamata City. Do not read if you have not finished this town yet / One young resident makes a severe statement that - for a moment - shatters Matthew's motivation.

***Chapter 1*: Coping**

This is your last Spoiler warning. Don't read before you finished Yamata. Are we good? Okay ^^

"*Himi* keeps crying and crying. She says "*Isaac* is in *danger*," but she never says who *Isaac* is."

I

Matthew froze and all HE could do now was to stare at the little girl who had uttered the sentence. Tyrell gave a soft frown and gulped in concern. There was a long tense silence hanging in the air and before anyone had the chance to change that, Matthew turned around and headed for the Inn. Though collected and calm on the outside, his aura was screaming otherwise. Karis bit her lip and exchanged glances with Tyrell who was all but ready to run after their leader.

"*Kraden?*", she asked, "How much more *prophecies* are there?"

All the while the little girl had begun to stare.

"Did... did I say something wrong?" she asked and upon this Tyrell set out after his friend. Sveta, knowing exactly what was going on due to the boys' memories bit her knuckles.

"I feel so helpless..."

W

When the redhead found his friend, Matthew was calmly staring at a wall. Nothing particular that decorated it, just empty space before it while he clutched the *scarf* around his neck tightly.

"I don't know what I'm doing here," Tyrell then spoke up,

"*Karis* is much better at this than me."

Matthew turned to give his friend a worn out glance.

"Are you *crying*? We're *men*! Men do not *cry*!" the fire-adept bellowed and Matthew shook his head.

"So you are not... well, *good*!" Tyrell had raised his voice and put his arms akimbo, a big grin written on his face, but the motivation did not quite work. All Matthew did was to give a strained sigh.

I

Tyrell began to shake a little, stomped his foot in anger and headed for the door.

"KARIS!" his voice rumbled through the village and the girl looked up. The wind-adept gave Sveta another look before she as well made her way over to the Inn.

"What is going on?" Eoleo finally burst out, looking bewildered at the abandoned leftovers of their group.

"I'm afraid..." Rief explained and readjusted his glasses.

"he's not *coping*."

L

Karis had arrived at the Inn and glanced into the room Tyrell had lead her to. Matthew was sitting on the floor, leaning against the wooden wall. By now the boy was squeezing his eyes shut, trying hard to not look at his friends.

"Matthew?" the wind-adept said calmly, as she walked over.

Tyrell followed her quietly. "You know what Kraden said?"

The earth-adept merely shook his head.

"Your father is a *Hero of Vale*," She explained, "He'll cope."

The boy began to shake, so Karis placed a firm hand on his shoulder, forcing him to look up at his two childhood friends.

"I know you're worried." Tyrell blurted, "My *father* is with him too! Do you think he'll just stand and watch?"

Matthew gaped at the fire adept.

"Do you think I'll just stand and watch?" At this the young earth-adept stood up and shook his head. Tyrell nodded. "That's right! This is just some stupid prophecy. If not only some garbage of a rumor! And we'll make sure it won't happen."

L

Matthew knew that they couldn't go back for several reasons. And the more he wished to believe Tyrell's words there was still this uncertainty nagging at him that wouldn't let him concentrate. So during their night at the Inn, Matthew silently woke and walked over to the sleeping old man. He quietly shook him awake and glanced at Kraden's confused eyes.

"Matthew?" the sage questioned, "What is it?"

And he *spoke*.

"My *dove*?" Kraden asked again, intrigued, "I don't know if she can make it through the storm."

Matthew looked back at the floor, disappointment written all over his face in the dim candle light. Kraden tiredly stroked a hand through his own hair, "But if it makes you feel better..." he eventually gave in. The old man had noticed that Matthew had been all but focused lately and as expected the boy's face lit up.

C

The earth-adept eagerly stumbled over to a table, grabbed a piece of paper from the shelves, some ink and the *Roc feather* they had acquired not too long ago. He didn't trust the dove to deliver this item and frankly, it was something he wanted to give his father *himself*, after he had messed up so badly with the *Luna Tower*, but it would do for a nice writing utensil.

O

"Hello, Father,"

Matthew stopped. This was hard. Where would he begin?

'We're doing well?' No, that was a lie.

"I'm sorry." The boy stopped again, biting his lip. Eventually Kraden came to look over his shoulder. Matthew gave him an uncertain glance and then looked over at the latest addition to their team. Before-mentioned Himi had by now joined their party and was seated next to Karis, both of them soundly asleep. She didn't bring up his father even once since they had met. The young leader turned his attention back to the paper.

"Take care."

Tyrell began to snore, causing Sveta to stir in her sleep. It alerted both of the wake males.

"Are you done, *son*?" Kraden asked, his age getting the better of his choice of words; and at the question, Matthew's hand quickly brushed over the letter another time.

"Miss you. Matthew."

He quickly rolled the paper up and handed it to Kraden with a nod. The old man took the letter, bound it together and put it in his pocket.

"I will have her deliver it at *dawn*." If dawn ever came.

P

Matthew glanced around to make sure his party, especially *Tyrell* was fast asleep before he gave Kraden a tight hug. The old man, first taken by surprise, smiled and rubbed his hand over the boy's back in comfort.

"It will be alright," He pulled back to glance into the child's sad gray eyes. "And it will be even better once we stop the Grave Eclipse."

Matthew's relieved expression fell for a second before determination returned to his face and he nodded full-

heartedly. The boy mouthed a mute thanks and then walked over to the window. It seemed he wouldn't be getting a full night's sleep in quite a while with the screams of the people dying echoing in his guilty mind. Responsibility was just so much more than to travel with friends and slay some monsters here and there.

E

Maybe he wasn't ready to be a man just yet.
Maybe he wasn't ready to be his father's heir just yet.
But that was quite alright.
Because as long as he didn't have to take his place...
...that meant that his father was still alive.

!

I've been a GS Fan ever since the first game. And yet this is my first fanfic, so be gentle on me, okay? ^^

Matthew's reaction might be questionable, but then again, you as the player are free to choose how to have him react on most cases, and frankly when I read that little girl's dialogue this was my personal player reaction. Anyone with me? (Darn you Himi, I just wish I could have used Sveta on your BRAINZ)

Also, I'd love to have this betad, sadly, I have no friends who even OWN this game yet. If you spot any mistakes feel free to leave them for me in a review or send me a PM so I can correct them. Thank you =)